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ABSTRACT

A survey of school administrators and educational researchers concerning the characteristics desired in elementary school language teachers resulted in rankings of personal qualities, pedagogical skills, and linguistic skills preferred for teachers of three program types: foreign language in the elementary school (FLES), foreign language exploration (FLEX), and immersion. The results suggest that administrators wish to hire candidates giving the impression of being good teachers, while the pool of qualified teachers for the demand is effectively shrinking. Many respondents were uncomfortable, in principle, about making compromises in teacher quality, but many also indicated willingness to compromise in a given skill area with the intent of providing on-the-job training or other later remedy. Most felt that certification was a desirable way of improving language teacher perfomance, but some thought it unnecessary. Most supported establishing competency requirements for improving language teacher preparation, and a majority wanted teachers involved in the process of setting standards. The researcher stated that the language teaching profession must work to reduce factionalism, especially concerning reform, and take initiative to train professionals in language instruction for young children. (MSE)

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The Elusive Abecedarian: Addressing the Shortage of Elementary School Second Language Teachers

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Abstract

This study explores teacher education, preparation, qualifications and needed personal qualities for second language teachers in the elementary school. Using those attributes identified by researchers as "good" teaching practices, a questionnaire was developed and administered to educational researchers, teachers and administrators with experience in second language teaching or teacher training. The respondents were asked to identify those competencies most desirable in a second language teacher at the elementary school level. The results were then tabulated and compared by program type. After identifying the qualities they most valued, the respondents were asked to decide which compromises, if any, they might make to realistically address current staffing shortages. In order to address the shortcomings they perceived in second language teacher preparation, respondents were also asked whether or not certification and competency requirements ought to be established as a professional norm.

The findings of this research suggest that substantial improvements in language education have not been made over the last several decades and that progress will be stymied until foreign language teachers, administrators and researchers can surmount professional factionalism, and identity problems, and establish a coherent set of standards, expectations and accountability for teachers of all languages at all levels.

The training of teachers is the dominant factor in any educational system, and especially in a democracy. More cogent and far-reaching than curricula or methods or even the content, the formation of the teacher is the key to the success of an educational program. A poor teacher will impart but little to his pupils in spite of the best possible program; while a superior teacher will transcend a poor subject or faulty organization, and with a method all his own, will compel the intellectual development of his pupils.

Stephen A. Freeman,

Middlebury College,

1941

The Elusive Abecedarian: Addressing the Shortage of Elementary School Second Language Teachers

Background

After two decades of neglect, renewed interest in learning a second language is finding its way into U.S. elementary schools. Currently, there are over fifty pieces of legislation pending before Congress in the areas of language and international studies. There is optimism in Washington that funding will be approved and increased support for language learning will become a reality during 1988 (Draper, 1987-88). This renewed interest has been evident in many states as well. For example, states like North Carolina and Louisiana are requiring that elementary school children receive instruction in a second language as part of their education. The renewed interest in the 1980s in a liberal arts education and also the call to education basics with emphasis on the teaching of the three R's--reading, writing, and arithmetic--have motivated some experts to state: "...if education reform has prompted a return to basics... there is nothing more basic than the language study that was once a part of every classical education" (Hochman, 1986, p.C5).

The confluence of social, political and economic factors encourages this trend. Yet it was primarily the report of "The President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies" (1979) that started forces moving in a direction to reverse the effects of neglect and nonchalance regarding second language (L2) education.

Despite the high levels of current interest, contradictory "forces are both spurring and stifling the demand for more language instruction" (Dismuke, 1987, p.5). While the public outside the L2 teaching profession has been pushing for

new and improved L2 programs, money and personnel to guide such changes are not readily available. Professional fragmentation, the disparity between what researchers reveal and practitioners do, inadequate teacher training programs, changing certification requirements and increased competency criteria all serve to undercut second language teaching in the U.S.

Statement of the Problem

Central to the problems facing L2 programs is a shortage of qualified teachers. Administrators often cannot meet staffing needs and they are frequently forced to recruit from abroad. The purpose of this study is to determine how these professional problems affect the staffing of L2 programs. This study examines what personal characteristics, pedagogical and linguistic skills the elementary L2 teacher ought to possess. Secondly, the report will explore where compromises occur when one faces staffing shortage realities.

Review of Literature

The teaching of a second language in the elementary school generally follows one of three models. Foreign Language Experience (or Exploratory; FLEX) introduces the pupil to the language and culture and tries to stimulate an interest in later foreign language (FL) study. Often these programs are extracurricular, occurring before or after school once or twice a week for 30-60 minutes. More ambitious in scope is Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) programs which work towards achieving a cultural awareness and a limited communicative proficiency with aural/oral skills predominant over mastery in reading and writing. Immersion, the third model, (either total or partial) does not have second language acquisition as its goal but rather as its

outcome. Immersion uses a standard elementary school curriculum, but presents it in the second tongue. It is taught by certified elementary school teachers who have native-like fluency in the second language. As might be apparent, immersion teachers are a rare and precious find.

While program differences are important--as different teacher qualifications and preparations are required for each--there are problems within the umbrella discipline of foreign language teaching itself that inhibit training teachers for these programs. Foremost is the fragmentation within the profession itself. Hancock (1980) asserts that "Foreign language education as a legitimate discipline seems to have fallen between the cracks in our universities" (p. 101). He argues also that this lack of professional identity and ensuing organizational dissension results in little or no political strength. Hollerbach (1980) agrees with Hancock adding that the profession is too often "fragmented to the point of schizo-phrenia" (p. 102). He sees it as incumbent that the teachers "reassert...the fundamental mission of our profession: to teach as best as we possibly can and within the multiple limitations we may have to accept" (p. 102). Fryer (1980) concurs: "It is really important that we establish a professional perspective from the elementary school to graduate school if we are to make progress" (p. 98).

Fryer and Joiner blame the "university culture" itself for failing to assert greater leadership or initiative. Fryer (1980) remarks that frequently the schools of education and foreign language receive less consideration by the university administration for funding than do other colleges. Joiner (1980) observes that before there can be much improvement in preservice education, the traditional distrust between colleges of humanities and colleges of

education, between college professors and school teachers, between literature and language specialists must first be put aside.

There is also a disparity between what researchers say and practitioners do. Brooks (1966) argues that recommendations and techniques that are supported by well-grounded justifications are needed to impart professional status to teachers and to the teaching of foreign languages, and to give prospective teachers a justification for following the recommendations of language researchers. Galloway (1980) observes this apparent breach between practitioners and researchers: "Sensing a lack of direction from the research community, teachers strike-out on their own" (p. 96). These factors affect in a subtle but insidious fashion the ability of the profession as a whole to pull together, define goals and identify areas of change, and to lobby effectively in the larger political arena for increased support and funding of second language learning.

Such disagreement about status and scope of second language education within its own ranks makes it extremely difficult for the profession to set and agree on preservice education standards for L2 teacher candidates. As Fryer (1980) points out, this becomes problematic when the government steps in to supply directives when the profession itself cannot. This can result in a "Catch 22" situation: the profession resents government interference and cooperates only to the degree necessary to secure funding or comply with the law. Federal intervention is also often ineffective because there may be a lack of in-depth understanding, trained personnel or adequate funds to successfully channel and direct change. D. Kennedy (personal communication, August 10, 1987) observes that change is most effective when standards are developed in a

collaborative setting such as local school boards working with state boards who incorporate the advice and expertise of teachers and supervisors actually and actively involved in L2 programs.

Setting standards and imparting directives for preservice and inservice teacher programs give the coherence and definition necessary for change to be effective and lasting. For a L2 teacher education program to be successful, however, one must consider the preparation and skills of the participants in these programs--both the teacher candidates and their professors. What makes a qualified teacher? How do we recognize "good teaching" and do we reward it? Do we test for competence, if so, how and under what criteria? What are certification requirements and who establishes these? Are the teachers of teachers held to the same standards and accountability as the teacher candidates?

There is a substantial body of literature addressing these queries. And, as might be expected, there is a varied array of perspectives. Stern (cited in Paquette, 1966) writes that first one ought to be a good primary teacher and secondly a good linguist: "A good primary teacher with an interest and willingness to learn is better than a trained linguist or a native speaker who does not understand the educational needs of primary children" (p. 98). Hollerbach (1980) stresses subject mastery but realizes also that a consummate control of subject matter alone is insufficient: "Good teaching is also a function of methods, strategies and sometimes gimmicks, of experience, of personality and character, enthusiasm, love and perhaps humility. But no amount of all these can replace subject mastery" (p. 102).

Anderson (1963), largely agreeing with Hollerbach about what talents are most important, also adds others: a knowledge of human growth and development, the nature of learning, demonstrated teaching skill and the crucial if rarely mentioned variable--that of an understanding of the culture in which the school exists, and the purpose of education in this culture. The latter is quite important, particularly because frequently L2 programs are perceived as "extra" (derogatorily known as "fringe") programs and their survival depends in great part on parental and community support. This supporting audience can best be garnered and succored by the L2 professional who understands his/her audience and can articulate the rationale for teaching L2 in general, and in particular to the specific community. Chastain (1976) writes of the firm belief that L2 teachers must have in their abilities and in their commitment to second language learning in order to successfully accomplish their task. He sees this as an on-going teacher responsibility, writing: "Individually and collectively, second-language teachers should be able to outline clearly and forcefully why they believe in second language study and to explain how any given classroom activity contributes to the accomplishment of these goals" (p.3).

While what constitutes good teaching may elude dictionary definition, experts agree that in assessing teacher candidates, one must consider the totality of the person. Brooks (1966) includes personal qualities in his list of desirable criteria for teacher candidates: evidence of a good character, a joy in working with children and adolescents, evidence of academic achievement and intellectual ability. He perspicaciously elaborates..."there should be discernible in the candidate something of the missionary's altruism and of the amateur actor's exuberance for these are qualities he is sure to need in many of the

critical and telling moments of his career" (p. 72-73). The National Council of Independent Schools (cited in Paquette, 1966, p.24) recognizes that while "the countless different techniques and personalities of excellent teachers...cannot be isolated and measured...we can probably discover certain basic qualities which these good teachers have in common." The council recognized that what constitutes the "ideal" teacher, may not be found in reality. This should not, however, discourage the profession from articulating the ideal because the ideal can serve as a model, as something to be striven for.

Recognizing good teaching resembles the famous Supreme Court Justice's definition of recognizing pornography: you know it when you see it, although defining it may prove difficult. Moskowitz (1976) isolated 36 characteristics identified with highly successful FL teachers in her research. In his research, Strevens (1981) examines the minimal qualities needed by a language teacher as personal qualities, foreign language competence, and pedagogical skills. Strevens recognizes that personal qualities cannot be taught (although through training they may be enhanced) by teacher educatic Freeman (1941) has articulated this well: "The most important on my list of ideas for the language teacher, is also the most intangible, for it concerns, not what he has studied or done, but what he is..." (p.293). Personal qualities, though outside that which can be controlled or regulated through instruction, are integral to teaching because in the final assessment, teaching is an art as well as a science and an artist must have innate ability that can be developed (but not created) through training. The same holds true for a teacher.

Once recognized--although perhaps with difficulty--is good teaching rewarded and if so, how? Grittner (1980) looks to the language departments

and schools of education to direct their attention and resources to recognizing those who excel in teaching and pedagogical research in a way (either by money or prestige) commensurate with professionals who are deemed outstanding in their areas of literary, linguistic, and/or educational research. Fryer (1980) believes that "the rewards for the teacher doing an outstanding job are intrinsic at best and certainly cannot be carried to the grocery store or the bank" (p.98). Dismuke (1987) observes the inevitable strain created by the conflicting realities of increased demands for FL programs by state and federal officials. This often results in mandates that are difficult to implement because they may not be realistically attainable given current shortages in funding and knowledgeable personnel. Joiner (1980) understands that many of the most promising L2 teacher candidates will reject teaching, discouraged as they are by the bitter realities of low salaries, violence in the schools, low prestige and unfavorable working conditions. She concludes that reform initiatives will be rendered useless if the profession and appropriate external agencies (at local, state and federal levels) do not match requirements with remuneration.

"Certified" versus "Qualified"

Assessing competence--whether a teacher is able to meet program goals--is another problem facing the FL profession. However, frequently the term "certified"--licensed by the state--is looked upon as synonymous with "competent" or "qualified." Anderson (1963) argues that there is no necessary correlation between certification and qualification. To become certified, a teacher must have done "x" amount of hours of appropriate coursework in one or more academic subjects and in professional education in a program of teacher education recognized by the state department of education. This is

very different from being "qualified"--that one can demonstrate ability to teach satisfactorily according to some pre-determined standards, and to the satisfaction of one's supervisors.

The issue of teacher certification is also complicated because, at present, there is no specific certification process for elementary L2 teachers. In the past, teaching certificates have been granted for elementary or secondary levels of instruction and foreign language was taught at the junior and senior high school level as subject matter expertise. If the second language teacher desired to teach at the elementary level, it was necessary to return to school to get re-certified at the elementary level. Frequently, therefore, those L2 teachers teaching in an elementary school, especially immersion teachers, are dual-credentialed.

Teachers in FLEX or FLES programs may or may not be credentialed, depending on whether one teaches in a public or private school. In the past, it was generally the private school which had a foreign language component in the curriculum. Public schools, often in response to state mandates, are now beginning to offer a second language in the elementary school.

To further complicate matters, there is a lack of college preparatory programs for those who wish to teach L2 at the elementary level. While colleges will graduate majors in education or foreign language, frequently, these two departments do not work in tandem enough to provide the opportunity of training in this specific discipline at the primary level. Consequently, college students are not made aware that occupations even exist in second language instruction at the elementary level.

Testing for Proficiency

Early research on FL teaching, done during the 1960s was damning, suggesting that many FL teachers (at all grade levels) were limited linguists themselves (Grittner, 1969). These and other like findings encouraged the Modern Language Association (MLA) to develop proficiency tests designed to evaluate linguistic, cultural and pedagogical knowledge. Some counties still use MLA Proficiency tests to assess an applicant's "paper" performance. In other counties and school districts, however, a FL teacher can be hired without demonstration of actual skill performance but with an appropriate amount of credit hours in the target language (usually 25-30 semester hours).

Subsequent events since the inception of the MLA tests and the like, however, have caused many people to question the validity of a battery of normed standardized tests and to view these tests as only a partial answer to certifying proficiency. The National Commission of Teacher Education and Professional Standards (cited in Paquette, 1966) recognized that "Teacher examinations are useful when they are one part of comprehensive plans for the regulation of standards [but] at their best, written tests of the highest quality provide for only a partial assessment because some dimensions of teaching will probably always defy precise measurement" (p. 40).

Grittner (1980) has been a major critic of standardized tests, noting that tests of culture, pedagogy and linguistics can become outdated and that furthermore, they may indeed be inadequate to the task. He argues that perhaps a better evaluative model might be derived from direct observation of instructor performance, as is the case in other academic/professional disciplines. While his suggestions are certainly valid, they may prove to be infeasible in

implementation. This may be especially true in current times of "excellence in education" where testing and course requirements are multiplying and competency-based teacher education (CBTE or performance-based teacher education, PBTE) is becoming a by-word of the educational profession.

This inability of the FL profession to coalesce and to come to agreement on how to validate and measure proficiency and assure certification has profound reverberations for teacher training. In her research on identifying FL teacher competencies and examining their role in future teacher education, Moskowitz (1976) cautions against acting in a hasty and trendy manner and embracing change for change itself. She asserts that

> although competency-based programs are intended to enhance teaching and learning, much more time will be needed to fulfill their manifold promises...If CBTE is to be effective and not merely another fad, we will have to eradicate the instant laundry lists of "competencies" now circulating. We must understand that it will take some years to truly uncover these competencies and to conduct experiments to determine what it is based on (p.23).

The necessity of finding adequate time to determine and assess competencies within the FL professional community cripples its ability to provide strong leadership and direction for teacher-training, certification, and evaluation. Prior to developing guidelines and criteria for teacher training programs, however, it is first necessary to define what teacher competencies are most desirable and effective in L2 teaching. Moskowitz (1976) warns:

> ...in implementing CBTE programs, a vast assumption is made--that we indeed know the specific competencies necessary to produce effective teachers, that tested criteria already exist. In effect, we can only speculate about these competencies. Yet we are forging ahead nationally, developing and prematurely mandating competency-based programs without a research base to back us up in determining which competencies to select (p.18).

D. Huss, Specialist, Foreign Language Education, for the Maryland State Division of Instruction, (personal communication, December 1, 1986) concurs. She warns of the potentially dangerous situation of hiring teachers in response to mandate rather than acting on thoughtful, informed need analysis.

From Recommendations to Reality

In the final analysis, the burden for reform lies with the FL profession itself. Freeman (1966) is emphatic on this point: "It is unthinkable that our profession should fail to act, recognizing that the formation of the teacher is the key to our success" (p. 5). Outside interference, in the form of laws and mandates, will serve to accelerate change but at a rate and in a fashion that may prove harmful over the long-term. Research and experience has shown that "a threatening approach will not be received well within the profession" (Fryer, 1980, p. 98). Teacher competencies must first be identified before they can become viable goals. While researchers are needed to define and describe the problems, practicing L2 professionals--teachers and administrators--are the best equipped to assess the research for viability and practicality given a particular educational setting. In words written some twenty years ago but which still ring true today, Brooks (1966) summarizes:

> our interest is essentially in concepts rather than terminology, in studies and results that have a significant bearing upon classroom instruction rather than in an extensive review of all the basic principles of the discipline concerned...Findings that remain so esoteric that they can be understood only by the specialist are not among our primary concerns (p. 77).

To be long lasting, reform must occur where its effect will be most wide-reaching. Logically, this would be at the graduate school, "the institution responsible for shaping not only teachers but teachers of teachers" (MacAllister, cited in Paquette, 1966, p. 79). This framework for reform must be as

scrupulously planned for as the reform itself. The teacher college has the responsibility to continually examine its program in light of the actual needs of the community. The college professors must be held accountable--as their students will be held accountable--for language proficiency, currency of field experience and an in-depth understanding of the unique problems that beset elementary school L2 teachers.

While it is necessary to profile the ideal L2 teacher for a given program; it is also important to know where, when and how to risk compromise in order to render theory practical. Compromise, however qualified, must be justified, but an inability to compromise at all will prove paralyzing and incapacitate further all efforts to integrate second language into the elementary school curriculum.

Methodology

Since rarely does the ideal match the reality, I wanted to see where compromises would be made to fit the ideal to the reality of practical staff needs. In order to determine how administrators cope with teacher staffing shortages, I selected and listed those L2 teacher competencies most frequently found in the professional literature, circulated these among practicing professionals of varying responsibilities and capacities, and asked these people to choose among and match these competencies with the three L2 program models. Respondents were chosen from different educational professions to get various perspectives on the issue. I also tried to select respondents based on geographical diversity, thereby exploring early L2 programs teaching different target languages to different ethnic populations with various sources of funding

and levels of administrative/community commitment. I grouped teacher qualities under three headings, and tabulated the responses, noting the highest and lowest rated skills in each of the categories and scoring them against one another to achieve an average.

Survey Results

Seventy-four percent of those people who were mailed a questionnaire responded to the survey. The results indicate that there is indeed a correlation between the needs of the various L2 programs and teacher qualifications to meet those needs. It was also found that the "ideal L2 teacher" must first and foremost be identified as having those qualities one identifies with good teaching practices, those which ought to transcend subject matter. Responses indicated that first one is a teacher, then one is a second language teacher and finally, one is an early L2 teacher and that each of these levels of teaching must encompass the preceding one. Although it was not raised as an issue on the questionnaire, it was overwhelmingly agreed that all those qualities listed under "personal" were essential to any good teacher and ought not to be different for early L2 teachers. While personal characteristics and good teaching skills are essential regardless of program type, linguistic skills are much more dependent on program type. Tables 1, 2, and 3 highlight the skills--most valued and least valued--by the questionnaire respondents per program model. Full questionnaire results can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1

Selected Questionnaire Results: FLEX

Mean score[a]	Descriptive attributes
	Personal qualities
Highest	
3.0	Enjoys teaching and children
3.0	Conveys self-confidence
2.83	Is patient, empathic
2.82	Praises and encourages students
2.82	Has sufficient maturity to sustain teacher-learner relations
Lowest	
2.13	Has a good sense of humor
2.53	Is creative
2.56	Is open, accepts suggestions and ideas from students
2.56	Is enthusiastic, animated
	Pedagogical skills
Highest	
2.92	Has multi-ethnic and multi-cultural sensitivity and knows how to teach it
2.72	Has knowledge of child development
2.70	Has ability to make judicious selection and use of approaches, methods, techniques, aids, materials and equipment for language teaching
Lowest	
1.96	Has knowledge of appropriate children's literature in both languages
2.20	Has skills in encouraging parent involvement
2.25	Has understanding of language and literacy skills as they appear in the elementary school content areas

Linguistic skills

Highest

2.73	Has an awareness of language as an essential element of culture and an understanding of the principal ways in which the foreign culture(s) differs from American culture
2.70	Has an appropriate knowledge of English
2.66	Has an awareness of the need to continue to improve his/her FL skills and to stave off the effects of normal personal foreign language attrition

Lowest

2.43	Has an appropriate level of fluency in the target language in areas of accuracy, vocabulary and pronunciation or language skills to be at least error free in the classroom, especially in vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation
2.13	Has knowledge of principles governing applied linguistics, especially in language acquisition and interaction between first and second languages and has the ability to apply this understanding to modern FL teaching

Note. For full questionnaire results and list of respondents, please see Appendixes A and B. [a] Score is the average of all respondents' answers using this scale: essential=3.0; desirable but not essential=2.0; non-essential=1.0; undesirable=0.0

Table 2

Selected Questionnaire Results: FLES

Mean score[a]	Descriptive attributes
	Personal qualities
Highest	
2.93	Enjoys teaching and children
2.86	Has sufficient maturity to sustain teacher-learner relations
2.82	Praises and encourages students
Lowest	
2.13	Has a good sense of humor
2.56	Is creative
2.58	Is open, accepts suggestions and ideas from students
	Pedagogical skills
Highest	
2.92	Has multi-cultural sensitivity and knows how to teach it
2.85	Has knowledge of elementary school curricula and methodologies appropriate to FL instruction
2.82	Has ability to evaluate the progress and diagnose the deficiencies of student performance
Lowest	
2.10	Has knowledge of appropriate children's literature in both languages
2.24	Has skills in encouraging parent involvement
2.40	Has ability to correlate his/her teaching with that in other content areas and to relate L2 study to other areas of the curriculum

Linguistic skills

Highest

2.86	Has an awareness of the need to continue to improve his/her FL skills and to stave off the effects of normal personal foreign language attrition
2.76	Has an appropriate level of fluency in the target language in areas of accuracy, vocabulary and pronunciation or language skills to be at least error free in the classroom, especially in vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation
2.75	Has an awareness of language as an essential element of culture and an understanding of the principal ways in which the foreign culture(s) differ from American culture
2.75	Has an appropriate knowledge of English

Lowest

2.60	Has knowledge of principles governing applied linguistics, especially in language acquisition and interaction between first and second languages and has the ability to apply this understanding to modern FL teaching

Note. For full questionnaire results and a list of the respondents, please see the Appendixes A and B. [a] Score is the average of all respondents' answers using this scale: essential=3.0; desirable but not essential=2.0; non-essential=1.0; undesirable=0.0

Table 3

Selected Questionnaire Results: Immersion

Mean score[a]	Descriptive attributes
	Personal qualities
Highest	
2.93	Is flexible; changes techniques, materials, attitudes as the situation warrants; is willing to try new things
2.93	Enjoys teaching and children
2.87	Has sufficient maturity to sustain teacher-learner relations
2.83	Praises and encourages students
Lowest	
2.54	Has a good sense of humor
2.58	Is enthusiastic, animated
2.61	Is open, accepts suggestions and ideas from students
2.61	Is creative
	Pedagogical skills
Highest	
3.0	Has knowledge of elementary school curricula and methodologies appropriate to FL instruction
2.90	Has multi-ethnic and multi-cultural sensitivity and knows how to teach it
2.90	Has ability to evaluate the progress and diagnose the deficiencies of student performance
2.86	Has knowledge of child development
Lowest	
2.50	Has knowledge of appropriate children's literature in both languages
2.61	Is conversant with professional literature and research of modern FL teaching
2.64	Has ability to communicate the rationale for early L2 instruction

Linguistic skills

Highest

2.90	Has an appropriate level of fluency in the target language in areas of accuracy, vocabulary and pronunciation or language skills to be at least error free in the classroom, especially in vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation
2.83	Has an awareness of the need to continue to improve his/her foreign language skills and to stave off the effects of normal personal foreign language attrition
2.75	Has an appropriate knowledge of English

Lowest

2.64	Has knowledge of principles governing applied linguistics, especially in language acquisition and interaction between first and second languages and has the ability to apply this understanding to modern FL teaching
2.73	Has an awareness of language as an essential element of culture and an understanding of the principal ways in which the foreign culture(s) differs from American culture

Note. For full questionnaire results and a list of respondents, please see Appendixes A and B. [a] Score is the average of all respondents' answers using this scale: essential=3.0; desirable but not essential=2.0; non-essential=1.0; undesirable=0.0

The category entitled "Personal Skills" had the highest "essential" responses of either of the other sections, "Pedagogical" or "Linguistic" respectively. That one enjoys teaching is judged paramount. Other highly rated skills included the praising and encouraging students and the maturity to sustain teacher-learner relationships. According to the respondents,qualities less essential to classroom success were the attributes of humor, creativity and openness.

Responses varied little by program with one significant exception: although in Immersion, flexibility tied with enjoyment of teaching as the quality deemed most important, flexibility was not listed among the most highly valued qualities in either the FLEX or FLES categories. This may be because in immersion teaching the teacher must spend more time with students, and must address more task objectives to cover a greater breadth of subject matter with materials usually not specifically targeted for the instruction of immersion students. This obviously requires an ability to meet different needs and responsibilities with some degree of ease. This is not the case in either FLEX or FLES classes when materials may be less comprehensive in scope or sequence given the objectives of the program. Immersion students also must take standardized tests over a variety of subjects whereas FLEX or FLES students do not.

Under the listing of Pedagogical Skills, the possession of multi-cultural sensitivity was rated of paramount importance. This skill scored the highest in FLEX and FLES programs and placed second highest in the Immersion category. It might be hypothesized that this is so because FLEX and FLES programs, by their very nature seek to instill in the student a cultural sensitivity highlighted

by language difference--language or increased cultural insight is a prime instructional objective. In Immersion, language is the means of instruction only and occurs as a by-product of instruction in other subject matter.

Respondents stress knowledge of teaching methodology and curricula in Immersion and FLES instruction. This may be because in both of these programs the instructor is given more time to teach more items in greater detail than is true in a FLEX situation. Also, to be successful programs, Immersion and FLES must integrate within the greater school curriculum rather than be perceived as an "addendum" (hence, expendable) subject. This is not necessarily true with FLEX which frequently is an "extra-curricular" activity sponsored by the PTA as an after or before school program taught, generally, by non-credentialed personnel, nor is it a graded subject placed on children's academic records. In Immersion it was unanimously judged essential that the teacher have knowledge of elementary school methodology and curricula. Some respondents stressed that these are two different skills and ought not be lumped together. It does not come as a surprise then that respondents rank the ability to evaluate students as of key importance in FLES and Immersion settings. Effective FLES and Immersion programs must show sequential instruction, appropriate articulation between grades and they must demonstrate a scope of instruction practical to the age and fluency of the learner.

Knowledge of children's literature is the least regarded by respondents in either program type. Presumably this is so because such knowledge, while certainly an asset, would not be detrimental to program effectiveness if it were not present.

In the category of linguistic skills, the qualities most important in the appraisal of the respondents included fluency and the willingness to stave off language atrophy for teachers of FLES and Immersion. This is certainly understandable given that in FLES, language acquisition is the focus of instruction and for Immersion, it is the method of instruction. By contrast, in FLEX, an awareness of language as an essential cultural component and the desirability of introducing children to the idea that language is only one distinguishing aspect of cultural diversity was considered by the respondents as most important. Respondents indicated that an appropriate knowledge of English did not rate highly for FLES or Immersion teachers.

The Reality

Above all, this study finds that administrators wish to hire those candidates that give the impression of being good teachers. However, it is essential that these persons have the linguistic abilities to meet the demands of the particular program for which they are being hired to teach. There is a highly limited applicant pool to staff elementary L2 needs and competing demands and conflicting forces often have the *de facto* effect of making even smaller the existing applicant pool. Particularly, difficulties arise from the burgeoning interest in creating L2 programs (sometimes to meet state mandates as is the case in North Carolina and Louisiana) and the shortage of qualified personnel to effectively staff these positions. This is further complicated because there are no training centers in the nation at this time who graduate L2 teacher specialists at the elementary level. At best, colleges are beginning to offer classes, or districts seminars or inservices to train interested people but the reality remains that unlike other disciplines there does not exist at the

present time any place that administrators may go to recruit prospective teachers. Thus, while there is beginning to be felt a real demand for elementary L2 teachers, the supply is inadequate to meet this demand. Too, at a time when political and economic events give impetus to the learning and teaching of second languages and we look to the elementary school classroom as a natural place to begin such instruction, we are handicapped by various forces that work against each other. Political events may legislate change before there are the financial means to enable that change to take place in an environment with skilled personnel to guide and manage such change.

Linking the Reality to the Ideal

When respondents were asked how one might best accomplish the ideal while working within the confines of the reality, several patterns emerged. Many respondents were clearly uncomfortable making compromises in the abstract. They wished concrete information as to specific program type, citing that each program has different goals and thus ought to be considered individually.

When asked to describe the area (personal, pedagogical or linguistic) in which one would most likely overlook, at least initially, in order to meet staffing realities, the answers confirmed the earlier findings about the necessity of personal characteristics as basic for a teacher of any subject matter. On their own initiative, writing in the margin, some respondents qualified their answers to add that were one to compromise on the pedagogical skills, it would be because one might later remedy this deficiency through on-the-job training, inservice, or additional coursework. Of the respondents, 25.8% replied that they would more likely accept a teacher candidate lacking pedagogical skills. In an

age where competency testing, evaluation and demonstrable teaching skills are being demanded, this may be interpreted as a contradiction: we increasingly work to ascertain competence through stringent evaluation of performance criteria yet, clearly, more respondents (25.8%) would initially accept a lack of pedagogical expertise. Some respondents clarified that such a compromise would be initially more palpable because any deficiencies pedagogically might be remedied through attendance at inservices or learned on-the-job. Seven respondents (22.6%) replied that they would compromise in the area of linguistic skills. By contrast, only four respondents (12.9%) wrote that they would be more likely to overlook personal shortcomings in a L2 teacher candidate. One respondent who checked this category wrote in "It's a difficult thing to pin down." (L. Alexander, personal communication, August 20, 1987). One might hypothesize that because of the very intangible, subjective nature of human impressions, these are the least responsive to categorical evaluation and thus are the most difficult to develop in a person.

Interestingly, four respondents (12.9%) would not compromise in any of these areas, citing that any compromise would negatively effect the program. What did emerge as interesting was that without exception those who were reluctant to compromise in any aspect were researchers and did not themselves have the responsibility to staff programs. However, those whose jobs forced them to cope with staffing shortages tended to be more amenable to compromise. Several individuals did add that while they would adjust for an interim time period, they would only compromise in the area they felt most easily or readily remedied. Thus compromise was at best an uncomfortable issue and one used only to meet short-term demands.

Improving Teacher Quality

The resurgent interest in second language instruction can be linked to many factors: economic, political and social motivations as well as the recent excellence in education movement. The latter, particularly, has had the janus-effect of quantifying excellence through stricter controls and evaluation of performance and increased pre-requisite training for certification.

Two major strategies have been used to improve teacher quality. Teacher certification requirements are mandated at the state level setting general education coursework outlines and supervised teaching requirements before certification is granted. For second language teachers there is the additional advanced coursework in the target language and the methodology necessary to teach it. Competency requirements, largely a product of the movement in the 1980s for greater excellence in education, are also set by the particular state, district or county. These generally require demonstrable skill through proficiency testing.

Respondents (77.4%) overwhelmingly answered that certification was at least a desirable way of improving teacher performance. However, although several thought certification useful--writing in their responses that it can serve as the ideal--they added that it was not necessary. Myriam Met, administrator and coordinator of FLES/Immersion in Montgomery County, Maryland, stressed that certification might have a negative backlash, that of discouraging prospective teachers who may have the skills without the paper certification. Met further contends that an additional certification requirement might have the *de facto* effect of discouraging prospective L2 teachers in their efforts to secure a teaching position. The long-term effect would, therefore, render even

smaller an already severely limited applicant pool (M. Met, personal communication, August 28, 1987).

Most questionnaire respondents desired establishing competency requirements as another way to improve L2 teacher preparation. Schinke-Llano (personal communication, August 20, 1987) sees these functioning as a list of desirable qualities but separates this from competency testing, which she does not advocate.

When asked who ought to set these standards for elementary teachers, the majority of respondents (64.3%) wished to involve teachers in this process. Most respondents checked several categories, expressing their belief that the setting of such standards ideally ought to emerge from joint recommendations by contributing professional groups. It is not surprising that teachers weighted so heavily in the response as most of the questionnaire respondents have teaching backgrounds. Figure 1 lists whom the respondents believed ought to participate in determining competency standards for L2 teachers.

Figure 1

Who ought to set standards in determining L2 teacher competency requirements?

Profession	Response rate[a]
Teachers	64.3%
State Boards	60.7%
Educational Researchers	39.3%
Local School Boards	35.7%
School Administrators	32.1%
Parents	17.9%
Federal Government	3.6%
Other[b]	3.6%

[a] n=28 [b] Professional Foreign Language Organizations, like The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and/or The Modern Language Association (MLA).

Looking Ahead

The current shortage of qualified elementary school second language teachers and the non-existence of second language teacher training programs at the college and university level has important implications for elementary school foreign language instruction in the United States. This study has found that, given the present lack of adequately trained L2 professionals, administrators cope as best they can--initially hiring the candidate who demonstrates traits associated with good teaching in general and who, through remediation, can improve those skills distinctive to L2 teaching. The internal chaos and factionalism within the FL profession--especially the lack of consensus between researchers and practitioners as to the area and method of reform--prevents the FL profession from exerting initiative and dynamic leadership in teacher training. Other factors that handicap progress are a lack of consensus on defining standards for teaching and teacher training, on defining modes and objectives of evaluation, on re-establishing the credibility and validity of its work. This very lack of professional identity has caused consumers and education advocates to attempt to define for the profession what it has failed to define for itself (Brod, 1980). Until a coherent diagnosis of what precisely are the problems besetting the FL profession, and teacher training in particular, otherwise laudable recommendations are of limited value--if they are not first schematically organized (Hollerbach, 1980) and compared to a professional norm (Fryer, 1980).

Internal factionalism must cease if public confidence in the FL profession is to grow. Such dissension can be diminished through the development and dissemination of research, and if teaching techniques and materials of a

practical and applied nature are made available to L2 teachers, administrators and parents. The National FLES Institute and FLES News are fledgling but important examples as the FL profession begins to unite and define itself and its purpose.

For change to be effective, the teacher training institution must take initiative to graduate qualified professionals in the art and science of teaching second languages to young children. As this study has found, those skills and attributes most frequently associated with good teaching practices are remarkably similar to the qualities and abilities administrators find useful for all three major program models of L2 instruction.

External pressures from the public, the state and federal legislatures, and local interest groups can spur change but only internal forces such as the FL profession (and its representative associations of ACTFL and MLA), university departments of FL and education, can maintain and supervise the momentum to accord with what is reasonable, in light of the practical constraints of budget limitations and personnel shortages and the particular needs of individual programs.

A recent innovation, the organization of summer language institutes, allows teachers to meet, share, discuss, and improve teaching and language skills. These provide an excellent means of allowing teachers to exchange ideas and interact, as do professionals in other occupations. Because the cost in attending these institutes may be prohibitive, one way in which states, counties and school districts might anticipate future L2 teacher staffing needs is by offering financial incentives like salary increases or scholarships for teachers who participate in such courses for professional improvement (D. Huss, personal

communication, December 1, 1986). Workshops and publications that target classroom practices and which are of a practical, pedagogical interest, will improve instructor performance and increase teacher motivation. More fundamentally, however, L2 teaching must be recognized by the public as a valued endeavor conducted by skilled specialists. In words written in 1941, but still applicable today, Freeman noted that

> the school training of a language teacher usually represents a minimum of seven years invested. Add to this the expense of foreign travel which has practically become a requirement for every language teacher, and it is evident that he has a right to be considered a specialist (p. 295).

Increased lobbying and self-promotion by teachers, administrators, researchers and parents at every level of government will help to accomplish this. Parents have banded together to form a support and lobbying group for second language acquisition: Advocates for Language Learning (ALL). Like ALL, Second Language Acquisition in Children (SLAC), sponsors conferences designed to inform teachers, administrators and parents of the research advances in language teaching and learning. To be successful, these and similar efforts need to be visibly and financially supported by everyone involved or interested in this aspect of education.

Throughout this study, the volume and validity of research on L2 teaching and teacher training conducted some twenty and forty years ago has been singularly impressive and useful. It is disheartening, however, that since that time, more implementation of these findings has not been made. It is of vital importance that current research devote greater attention to examining why earlier programs failed to deliver the promises that the educators of the day foresaw for them.

While this study has focused on the preparation and qualifications needed for second-language teachers at the primary level, future studies might examine the preparation and qualifications of secondary L2 educators. It would be interesting to compare these findings, identifying the likenesses and dissimilarities and postulating perhaps on the reasons for both. One future study might attend to the preparation of Canadian L2 teachers at all levels to see if there might be training methods that could be incorporated in and appropriate to U.S. teacher training institutions.

This study elicited the opinions of those who are directly responsible for L2 teacher hiring - administrators as well as the more esoteric views of research specialists. It might prove enlightening to ask currently practicing teachers about the training they received, particularly examining its strengths and weaknesses in light of practical experience.

As teaching colleges begin to try and accommodate the new staffing requirements brought about by independent state mandates, a pilot study tracking and evaluating new L2 teachers performances would allow teacher colleges to scrutinize and possibly reform their training programs accordingly. Such actions would negotiate appropriate change in an informed and not a reactive manner. These efforts could only strengthen the presence of foreign language in the elementary school.

It is axiomatic that theory is often disengaged from reality. To accomplish the needed change, and as is the case with this study, researchers must initiate greater dialogue with practitioners to see where research needs lie and in order to apply research findings to practical teaching needs.

Teaching is both an art and a science: as an art, it is improved through time and practice. As a science, it is perfected through trial, error and exposition so that other scientists can continue with the studies of their predecessors. While compromises must be made in teacher qualifications to meet the growing demand with a limited supply of trained second language professionals, similar compromises ought not to be made in the areas of teacher preservice and inservice education. The same standards of excellence must be expected from the teachers of teachers that are expected from the teachers of our children. For example, a doctorate in an obscure linguistic specialty cannot substitute for practical, current field knowledge. Grittner (1980) believes that the profession has the responsibility

> to set at least the same standards for college and university teachers that are required of those whom they are educating to teach in the elementary, junior high, and senior high schools of the nation. It might be viewed as ironic that the people who are being trained to teach in the public schools must meet certain standards while the people who are doing the training generally have neither standards nor an accountability progress to attest to their ability to teach or to perform in the language (pp. 75-76).

Achieving such a confluence of standards, expectations and accountability for second language teachers at all levels--from elementary school to the undergraduate and graduate levels of higher education--would do much to enhance the FL profession's status and increase public support of, respect, and confidence in the attainability of the generally esteemed goal of multiple fluency for Americans of all ages and backgrounds.

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APPENDIX A

Early Second Language Teacher Competencies Questionnaire

This questionnaire seeks to identify those competencies most desirable in a teacher of elementary second language (L^2) (in FLEX, FLES or Immersion programs). Please take a few minutes to complete it and return it to me in the postage paid envelope provided. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

Please read the following descriptions of the three limited program types for early L^2 instruction.

FLEX--program that aims at exposing children to basic concepts of foreign language (L^2).

FLES--program having language instruction one to five times a week and which emphasizes sequential development of four skills.

Immersion--program where at least 50% of the elementary school programs are taught in the foreign language.

I. The Ideal

1. Do you feel it is important to establish professional competency criteria for teachers of elementary L^2 programs (e.g., criteria that would outline needed competencies for K-6 foreign language teachers)?

   Yes 90.3% No ___ Don't know/Other 9.7%

2. Please rate in importance those competencies which you feel are appropriate and desirable for teachers in the three ba ic L^2 program types listed below according to the following scale:

   Scale: E = essential (3.0); D = desirable but not essential (2.0); N/E = non-essential (1.0); U = undesirable (0.0)

Scale: E = essential (3.0); D = desirable but not essential (2.0); N/E = non-essential (1.0); U = undesirable (0.0)

	FLEX	FLES	IMMERSION
A. Personal Qualities			
Has sufficient maturity to sustain teacher-learner relations.	2.82	2.86	2.87
Is flexible; changes techniques, materials, attitudes as the situation warrants; is willing to try new things.	2.76	2.80	2.93
Is well-organized.	2.70	2.73	2.74
Enjoys teaching and children.	3.0	2.93	2.93
Conveys self-confidence.	3.0	2.68	2.66
Is dedicated, hard-working.	2.72	2.72	2.73
Has a good sense of humor.	2.13	2.13	2.54
Praises and encourages students.	2.82	2.82	2.83
Is enthusiastic, animated.	2.56	2.63	2.58
Is creative.	2.53	2.56	2.61
Is patient, empathic.	2.83	2.76	2.77
Is open, accepts suggestions and ideas from students.	2.56	2.58	2.61
Other (specify) _____			
Average	2.70	2.68	2.73
B. Pedagogical Skills			
Has knowledge of child development.	2.72	2.78	2.86
Understands the psychology of learning.	2.64	2.71	2.76
Has multi-ethnic and multi-cultural sensitivity and knows how to teach it.	2.92	2.92	2.90
Has skills in encouraging parent involvement.	2.20	2.24	2.48
Has understanding of the American elementary school setting.	2.60	2.68	2.77
Has skills in classroom management/conflict.	2.65	2.73	2.77
Is conversant with professional literature and research of modern foreign language teaching.	2.44	2.58	2.61
Has knowledge of appropriate childrens' literature in both languages.	1.96	2.10	2.50

B. Pedagogical Skills (continued)	FLEX	FLES	IMMERSION
Has knowledge of elementary school curricula and methodologies appropriate to FL instruction.	2.48	2.85	3.0
Has understanding of language and literacy skills as they appear in the elementary school content areas.	2.25	2.62	2.85
Has ability to communicate the rationale for early L^2 instruction.	2.48	2.56	2.64
Has ability to make judicious selection and use of approaches, methods, techniques, aids, materials and equipment for language teaching.	2.70	2.80	2.70
Has ability to correlate his/her teaching with that in other content areas and to relate L^2 study to other areas of the curriculum.	2.26	2.40	2.76
Has ability to evaluate the progress and diagnose the deficiencies of student performance.	2.61	2.82	2.90
Other (specify) _____			
Average	2.49	2.62	2.75
C. Linguistic Skills			
Has knowledge of principles governing applied linguistics, especially in language acquisition and interaction between first and second languages and has the ability to apply this understanding to modern FL teaching.	2.13	2.60	2.64
Has an awareness of language as an essential element of culture and an understanding of the principal ways in which the foreign culture(s) differs from American culture.	2.73	2.75	2.73
Has an appropriate level of fluency in the target language in areas of accuracy, vocabulary and pronunciation or language skills to be at least error free in the classroom, especially in vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation.	2.43	2.76	2.90
Has an awareness of the need to continue to improve his/her foreign language skills and to stave off the effects of normal personal foreign language attrition.	2.66	2.86	2.83
Has an appropriate knowledge of English.	2.70	2.75	2.75
Other (specify) _____			
Average	2.53	2.74	2.77

II. The Reality

1. Deficiencies in which of the three areas would you most likely overlook in order to accommodate your staffing needs? (Check one.)

   Personal 12.9% Pedagogical 25.8% Linguistic 22.6%

   Other (includes no response, none, or qualified answers) 35.5%

2. Is certification necessary and/or desirable/appropriate to ascertain teacher competency in early L^2 instruction?

   Yes 77.4% No 12.9% No Answer 9.7%

3. Should competency requirements for early L^2 teacher candidates be set?

   Yes 87.1% No 6.4% No Answer 6.4%

4. If yes, who ought to set these standards?

64.3%	teachers	32.1%	school administrators
39.3%	educational researchers	35.7%	local school boards
60.7%	state boards of education	3.6%	the federal government
17.9%	parents		

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Respondents

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